

Today's News - Wednesday, June 8, 2011

- Farrelly takes on Barangaroo, the latest in a string of international competitions that "were adroitly shepherded from soaring promise to bungled mess," adding to the "list of Australia's surprisingly feeble attempts to make the architectural map" ("a big jury of small people" didn't help).
- Australia's Venice Architecture Biennale show "Now + When" was a big hit, and efforts are underway to design a new pavilion - but "if architecture provides such cultural interest in Australia's creative talent, why is it subordinate to art at Venice?"
- High hopes for Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District, but "some worry whether the city has the artistic bent to fill all the new buildings with meaningful content" (it's also "hard to imagine a Guggenheim or Tate being officially linked to a mall").
- Regeneration of Johannesburg's inner city, "coupled with some breathtaking buildings have caught the eye of international design mavens."
- Russell strolls the High Line part deux with Corner and Scofidio: it "has improbably become a global phenomenon" + The Dirt brings us lots of great pix.
- Hume hails plans for Underpass Park that will transform space beneath Toronto's infamous raised highways "into something open, accessible, usable, and even enjoyable."
- You might consider Alsop's design of a new Toronto transit station "as post-apocalyptic or merely avant garde" - either way, "it certainly makes its mark."
- Stephens on Eisenman's controversial City of Culture of Galicia: "Its brazen monumentality and unsettling scale ravenously explore the difference between artifice and nature. Time will reveal its significance."
- Belogolovsky has a candid Q&A with Eisenman re: the project, green architecture, and a lot more.
- LaBarre offers an eyeful of AOL's new HQ in Palo Alto: the design takes pains to make it "cheerful and humane. We like the design" (with a couple of ouches).
- English Heritage puts a damper on UBS office plans in London.
- Safdie's 44-year career has shaped "our habitats in exploding metropolises" with designs that "reflect both ethical and aesthetic agendas."
- Arts and research facilities share the spotlight for 2011 AIBC Architectural Awards.
- Call for entries: RFQ for The Menokin Glass Concept in Warsaw, Virginia + Canada's 2011 Design Exchange Awards.

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Without further Barangaroo ado, here's the chance not to stuff it up: Perhaps...it's time to rethink what should happen...instead of just what shouldn't...The list of Australia's surprisingly feeble attempts to make the architectural map...are alarmingly similar. All were international competitions...All were adroitly shepherded from soaring promise to bungled mess...And all, inevitably, produced flawed results...the 2005-06 Barangaroo jury was a big jury of small people. By Elizabeth Farrelly -- Thallis Berkemeier; Thom Mayne; PTW; Richard Rogers - Sydney Morning Herald

Biennale's best is still a poor cousin: Hailed as Australia's best Venice Architecture Biennale, the immersive exhibition Now + When captured the public's imagination...The exhibition's success prompts the question: if architecture provides such cultural interest in Australia's creative talent, why is it subordinate to art at Venice? -- Philip Cox; Norman Day- Sydney Morning Herald

A Bid for Culture in a City of Commerce: West Kowloon Cultural District...unusual bundling of state arts funding and commercial enterprise plays into Hong Kong's image as a shopping haven, not a center for high culture...it is hard to imagine a Guggenheim or Tate being officially linked to a mall...some worry whether the city has the artistic bent to fill all the new buildings with meaningful content..."I'd rather we get it right than get it fast." -- Norman Foster- New York Times

An architect's Joburg: Regeneration of the inner city, coupled with some breathtaking buildings...have caught the eye of international design mavens...There is a host of architects who have worked tirelessly and continue to do so to ensure that the city stays a step ahead. -- Boogertman + Partners; Populous (formerly HOK Sport); studioMAS; Italo Lupini; JC Cook & Cowen [images]- City of Johannesburg (South Africa)

High Line's New Stretch Has Wildflowers, Lawn, Views: ...a hairline of greenery running 22 blocks atop a nearly forgotten railroad viaduct, has improbably become a global phenomenon..."The power of the High line is its indifference to the stuff around it. It's a sort of brutal collage." By James S. Russell -- Diller Scofidio + Renfro; James Corner Field Operations; Piet Oudolf [images, video]- Bloomberg News

High Line Phase 2 Now Open: The new segment creates a rich array of experiences within its half-mile, 10 block length. -- James CornerField Operations; Diller, Scofidio + Renfro; Piet Oudolf [images] - The Dirt/American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Underpass Park will change the city forever: ...in West Don Lands...will become a mixed-use, mixed-income neighbourhood [and] the location of the 2015 Pan-Am Games Athletes' Village...space beneath Toronto's infamous raised highways will be transformed into something open, accessible, usable, and even enjoyable...offers hope that the city might manage to keep up with the future after all. By Christopher Hume -- Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg- Toronto Star

Architects incorporate Corten steel in design of new Toronto subway station: Whether you see the design of the new Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Steeles West Station as post-apocalyptic or merely avant garde, it certainly makes its mark on a system known primarily for functionally utilitarian buildings in a modernist vein. -- Will Alsop; The Spadina Group Associates; Stevens Group Architects; IBI Group Architects; LEA Consulting; Halsall Associates [image]- Daily Commercial News (Canada)

Spain: ..has become a lightning rod for debate regarding its high cost, excessive space, and ambiguous program...As it ages, it will no doubt lose its rawness, but probably keep its brute energy. The gesture is so defiant. Its brazen monumentality and unsettling scale ravenously explore the difference between artifice and nature. Time will reveal its significance. By Suzanne Stephens – Eisenman Architects; Andrés Perea Ortega; Antonio Maroño [slide show]- Architectural Record

Changes Are Coming: The City of Culture in Galicia by Peter Eisenman is a controversial project since its inception (budget overruns, oversized scale, lack of program among others). An interesting starting point for a discussion between Vladimir Belogolovsky and its author. [images]- MAS Context

At Least AOL's New Offices In Palo Alto Aren't A Disaster: Studio O+A has taken pains to make the place cheerful and humane...We like the design. And we hope it does what the design firm prophesies and creates "a stimulating environment for the firm's staff." By Suzanne LaBarre [slide show]- Fast Company

English Heritage deals blow to £340m UBS office plans: Watchdog backs listing of Broadgate buildings, where the Swiss bank wants to demolish its existing HQ and build a new one..."one of the most important and successful developments of its period and type, possessing special architectural and historic interest, and therefore should be listed at Grade II" -- Peter Foggo/Arup (1980s)- Guardian (UK)

Designing for dignity: Moshe Safdie's success doesn't distract from his desire to create habitats that fit cities – and honor the individual...With 75 major buildings and master plans to his credit during a 44-year career, he's still shaping our habitats in exploding metropolises...[his] designs reflect both ethical and aesthetic agendas. [slide show]- Christian Science Monitor

Arts and Research Facilities Share the Spotlight for 2011 AIBC Architectural Awards / Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia Award in Architecture -- Patkau Architects; Bing Thom Architects; Gair Williamson Architect; Walter Franci Architecture/Nick Milkovich Architects; Henriquez Partners Architects; Kobayashi + Zedda Architects; David Nairne + Associates - Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC)

Call for entries/Request for Qualifications/RFQ: The Menokin Glass Concept: create a prime location to understand and experience 18th century Tidewater Virginia building construction techniques using 21st century technology at Francis Lightfoot Lee's Menokin estate in Warsaw, Virginia; deadline: July 8 - The Menokin Foundation

Call for entries: 2011 Design Exchange Awards: DXAs are Canada's only design competition to judge design by results: balancing function, aesthetics and economic success...Designers from all disciplines and/or businesses operating in Canada are eligible; earlybird deadline: July 4; submission deadline: September 30- DX/Design Exchange (Toronto)

Book Review: Diving into Architecture from Every New Angle: Reading Guillevic's "Geometries": Why an obscure book of French poetry in a flashy translation goes to the heart of every architectural practice. By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

-- Steven Holl Architects: Nanjing Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, China
-- Olafur Eliasson: Your rainbow panorama, ARoS Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark

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